



A

S E R M O N

Preached before the

ROYAL COLLEGE of PHYSICIANS,
LONDON,

In the Parish-Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow*,

On *Wednesday, September 20, 1752.*



SEERMON

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
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In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bon.

On Wednesday, September 20, 1751.

One of the Anniversary Sermons, appointed by the W^{ts} of the
Lady Sarah, pursuant to the Design of her late husband,



Printed at the Request of the College.

By THOMAS CHURCH, D.D.

Vicar of Battersea, and Treasurer of St. Paul's.

L O N D O N :

Printed for John and James Rivington, in St. Paul's

Church-yard.

M. DCC. LI.

TO

Dr. WILLIAM WASEY, President;

AND TO

Dr. GIDEON HARVEY, Elect.

Sir EDWARD HULSE, Elect.

Sir WILLIAM BROWNE, Elect. Cenfor, and Treasurer,

Dr. ROBERT NESBITT, Elect.

Dr. THOMAS REEVE, Elect.

Dr. AMBROSE DAWSON, Elect, and Cenfor,

Dr. JAMES HAWLEY, Elect, and Cenfor,

Dr. ROBERT TAYLOR, Cenfor,

Dr. THOMAS LAWRENCE, Register,

AND TO

The rest of the FELLOWS of
The ROYAL COLLEGE of PHYSICIANS, London;

This SERMON is,

With all due Respect, dedicated by

Their most obedient, and

Most humble Servant,

THOMAS CHURCH.

THOMAS CHURCH.

Most humble servant,

Thos. M. Church

With all due respect, dedicated to

This SERMON is

The Royal College of Physicians, London;

The Rev. of the Rector of

AND TO

Dr. THOMAS LAWRENCE, Registrar,

Dr. ROBERT TAYLOR, Clerk,

Dr. JAMES HAWLEY, Black, and Canon,

Dr. AMBROSE DAWSON, Black, and Canon,

Dr. THOMAS RIVER, Black,

Dr. ROBERT NESBITT, Black,

Dr. WILLIAM BROWNE, Black, Canon, and Treasurer,

Dr. EDWARD HULSE, Black,

Dr. GIDEON HARVEY, Black,

AND TO

Dr. WILLIAM WASSY, President;

TO

Pf. ciii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Bless The LORD, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits : Who forgiveth all thine iniquities : Who healeth all thy diseases : Who redeemeth thy life from destruction : Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies : Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

TH E S E words elegantly express the joy and gratitude of an humble and pious soul at the remembrance of the temporal and spiritual blessings, which G O D in His Infinite Goodness has provided and bestowed. And as these, tho' not inseparable, have both a natural and moral connection with each other ; the consideration of each of them will deserve our strictest attention ; nor, I trust, be unsuitable to the occasion of the present meeting, or to the design of those worthy persons, by whom it has been established and encouraged.

THE wisdom and goodness of our CREATOR appear conspicuously in all the works of nature. There is ~~not the commonest or meanest production~~, but what will afford a religious and attentive observer matter of admiration and pleasure. But the higher we go in the scale of beings, the more wonderful in their contrivance and beauty shall we find them. Man being placed at the head of this lower world, and made the first of the visible creation, the whole formation and structure of him is peculiarly and eminently worthy of our closest view, must reward the philosopher with high satisfaction, and inspire him with all gratitude and devotion. Our body, and our mind, are each of them *fearfully and wonderfully made*; and the union betwixt them, the distinct manner in which they exert their several powers, and yet the dependence, and, indeed, the strong influence, which they have upon each other, in their present state—these are things yet more astonishing; which we may ever admire, and be thankful for, but shall never be able to *find out to perfection*.

To enter into particulars, and shew the beauty which appears in every part and organ of the human frame, is a task, which I must own myself to be very unequal to, and an attempt, which would only expose my imprudence and ignorance, especially before those, whose profession and studies cannot but have led them into the most exact inquiries of this nature, and into a distinguished knowledge and skill in such points—And yet, the uses and ends, to which several of our faculties and members are adapted, and
which

which they excellently answer, are so very open and obvious; the harmony and connection, which is between them all, is so felt and experienced by every one; that no man can be so absolutely incurious and inattentive to his own actions, as not to be in some measure sensible, how wisely and happily he is formed. The want or disorder of the least part of us, when such happens thro' any accident, cannot but sufficiently convince us of its importance; and not only the inconveniences we suffer, but the frequent pain, misery, and perhaps danger, we are thus thrown into, till the use of it be restored to us, are such, as ought certainly to shew, how much it behoves us to *bleſs The Lord* for the pleasures of health and ease; for the natural order, and proper exercise, of all our powers, limbs, and senses*; and much more still, for our reason and understanding.

FOR these are all His *benefits*; and as such ought always to be regarded and employed by us. To account for them by chance, or in any other way exclusive of His Almighty Efficiency, is the greatest of absurdities. An atheist, if there can be one, must either have his natural faculties so weak and disordered, or have offered such violence to his reason, and so far debased his very nature, that we can scarce suppose him fit to be argued with, or capable of conviction. To imagine, that so singularly curious and exact a frame as the human body, could be originally produced,

* The beauty and uses of these are finely described by *Tully, de Nat. Deor. L. 2. & de Legibus, L. 1.*

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but by unspeakable wisdom and power, would be no less, a want of philosophy, than of gratitude. And as it is most probable, that all motion, and all continuance of existence, is to be ascribed to the immediate agency of The CREATOR; so especially, when a machine thus various and complicated is preserved amidst all the uncertainties and perils that surround it, in perfect health and ease, so long as we frequently experience it to be; we are plainly led by reason, as well as taught by scripture, to ascribe this to the unceasing interposition and protection of a gracious Providence*. How impious, then, must it appear to *forget* these daily *benefits* of His, and not to acknowledge that secret Hand, to which we owe our constant support! How should the reflection on this *continual miracle*, as we may style it, as well as on the wonders of our formation, lead our thoughts up to Divine Goodness, which watcheth over us, and guards us against the terrors of the night, *and from the arrow that flieth by day!* Surely, lower than this FIRST CAUSE of all, a wise and good man will not stop. And, indeed, whoever does, will be lost and bewildered in endless difficulties and inconsistencies †.

THIS

* The Author of *Religio Medici* well observed, " Truly there goes a great deal of PROVIDENCE to produce a man's life unto threescore," &c. §. 43. And again, §. 44. " Men that look no farther than their out-sides, think health an appurtenance unto life, and quarrel with their constitutions for being sick; but I, that have examined the parts of man, and know, upon what tender filaments that fabrick hangs, do wonder, that we are not always so."

† Lord Bacon finely observed, that " while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no farther: but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and
" linked

THIS then is the true use to be made of considering the exactness and beauty of the works of nature, and particularly the admirable structure of the human frame; to imprint upon our minds as strongly as possible a due sense of the many and great obligations we perpetually lie under to THE SUPREME AUTHOR and PRESERVER of it—to remember how far superior He hath formed us, in our bodies as well as our minds, to the beasts of the earth—and, as the consequence of this, to adore His power, and wisdom, and goodness; to depend every moment, in every circumstance, upon Him; and to make it our great and sincere endeavour to please and obey Him.

IT may perhaps be urged by those, who would find out some pretences to evade their duty, or to excuse the neglect of it, that our frame, exquisite as the workmanship of it is, is continually disordered; that whole armies of distempers beset us on every side; that, while we boast our nature and destination to be higher than those of brutes, our lives are much shorter * than many of theirs, and, some outward accidents

“linked together, it must needs fly to PROVIDENCE and DEITY.”
Essay on Atheism. Vid. Tull. de Nat. Deor. L. 2.—And to the same effect the Author of *Religio Medici*, “Tho’ we christen effects by their most sensible and nearest causes, yet is GOD the true and infallible Cause of all, whose concurrence, tho’ it be general, yet doth it subdivide itself into the particular actions of every thing, and is that Spirit, by which each singular essence not only subsists, but performs its operation.” §. 18.

* No less a man than *Theophrastus* appears to have given too far into this objection, and that at the very serious time of all. “*Theophrastus autem moriens accusasse naturam dicitur, quod cervis et cornicibus vitam diuturnam,*

dents excepted, more precarious than all of them; nay, that a far greater number of diseases and pains, and these of a far more dreadful kind, befall us, than they are ever subject to. And hence the wisdom and care of DIVINE PROVIDENCE may at first seem impeached: Hence some have gone so far, as to pretend, that they are not obliged for a life so full of troubles and disorders.

THIS is a subject very proper to employ our thoughts farther. Let us then enter into an examination of the plea: Which we shall find to end in the clearest and fullest vindication of GOD, and to fix the blame, where it ought to lie, on the presumption and perverseness of man. — In order to this, let us endeavour to trace the distempers of men up to their original and cause — assign some reasons, why GOD may have permitted them — shew the good uses and consequences, which He intended us to draw from them — and point out the variety and efficacy of those helps and remedies, which He hath granted us against them.

THE fact is undeniable, and not to be dissembled, that, of all creatures upon earth, man is most subject to distempers, notwithstanding all the care, with which he professes to guard against them. And his ability of foreseeing them, as it but seldom prevents them, may appear to be of little service to him, and rather to add to his solicitude and torment.

“turnam, quorum id nihil interesset; hominibus, quorum maximè interfusset, tam exiguam vitam dedisset: quorum si ætas potuisset esse longinquior, futurum fuisse, ut, omnibus perfectis artibus, omni doctrinâ hominum vita erudiretur.” *Tull. Tusc. Quæst. L. 3. § 28.*

BUT to what is this unhappy condition owing? Can we think, that man was at first unequally dealt by? Or, came originally out of the hands of his MAKER under these peculiar disadvantages? — No, surely. Such a constitution of things cannot seriously be considered, as that, which GOD ordained and appointed, when He made the heavens and the earth, and pronounced all the works of His hands to be *good*. Our nature plainly appears to be corrupted and depraved. And if this fell out through the fault of man, it will be very idle and wrong in man to complain of the consequence of his own bad conduct.

IF we only take the matter *à priori*, it is the most natural supposition to make, that, when man was created, his faculties were all perfect in their kind; that he was created able to answer the end of his being with the same ease and constancy, as all other creatures do theirs; that he was designed for a much longer and more certain continuance here, and, if innocent and obedient, would have lived in health and quiet, till it pleased GOD to translate him, without any pain or fear, from earth to heaven. According to this view of things, which in itself is an extremely probable one, all the several disorders and sicknesses of our present state, and all the violent and tormenting ways, which lead to death, could have at first no place at all, must be thought adventitious to human nature, and ascribed to some errors or crimes of man, which have thus debased it.

BOTH the history of *Moses*, and the writings of *St. Paul*, in the strongest manner confirm these natural suppositions, and

and teach us, that man shamefully fell from his duty, and that he was condemned to labour, pains, and death, as the punishment of his transgression. The root then being thus corrupted, no wonder the branches proceeding from it are found infected. Here therefore we see the first source of all the disorders, to which we can be liable, and can account for the introduction of evil into the world, that πολυδρυλλητον ζήτημα *, that *much canvassed and very famous question*, which so long perplexed all, who either did not know, or would not receive, this account.

BESIDES, if we look no farther than our present condition, we shall soon perceive many immediate causes, into which the most of our distempers may be resolved. Our very employments here occasion several. A very laborious, or a very sedentary life, breed different ones, and either expose us to sudden heats and colds, and many hurtful accidents, or impair and enfeeble us, or bring upon us acute and rack-ing tortures. And yet we must observe, by the way, that to these various stations and businesses, in which we are divided, a great part of the comfort and ornament of human life is owing. So that tho' pain and sickness be sometimes the consequences of these, yet we receive from hence, upon the whole, far more safety and pleasure.

ADD to this, that as no one art or science can be mastered, and much less displayed, without considerable application and attention of thought; so the more intensely fixed the

* Ποθεν η κακια; was a question which *Eusebius* speaks of in the following words:—πολυδρυλλητε παρα τοις αιρεσιωδαις. *H. E. L. 5. c. 27.*

mind

mind is on any subject, the more apt is the imagination to grow over-heated, and the greater danger there is of falling into the most terrible of disorders, madness and distraction. The same will also arise, from the passions being immoderately fixed and busied upon any particular object. Here then we see a kind of evils, which the beasts cannot be in the same manner subject to, which are accidentally attendant upon the noblest of our faculties, our understanding itself; the distinguishing gift of G O D to us above them all.

BUT the chief causes of our diseases are our own evil passions and vices, which we here indulge, to the prejudice both of ourselves and others. Mere imprudence has indeed frequently a pernicious effect: And want of due care has by degrees destroyed many a strong constitution. Nay, strength and vigour itself, by tempting men to be negligent and rash, has too often proved its own ruin. But nothing has ever been so destructive as sin; which, of whatever kind and degree, is in this respect more or less fatal; and not only tends to the irretrievable ruin of the soul hereafter, but to innumerable torments and diseases here. While the young and unexperienced are indulging every unruly appetite, and, under the false notion and pretence of pleasure, are plunging into the very depths of intemperance and sensuality; what shameful and pungent pains do they bring upon themselves? What an age of weakness and misery, if they should live more than half their days, and not fall early martyrs to their own excesses, are they in the hours of jollity storing up for themselves? — So also, how beautifully, as well as properly, is *envy* stiled *the rottenness of the bones!* as this

evil affection never fails to prey upon the person, who does not take care to suppress it, and is continually gnawing and eating out his strength and ease, till it leaves him none remaining. —How often are pride and contention, revenge and fury, gratifying themselves, at the sure expence of health, and enjoyment of the comforts of life; while the blood is put into an unnatural ferment, and the unhappy patients transported, sometimes into violent fevers, sometimes into quarrels, wounds, and death?—To mention only one instance more. As impiety, or a want of a just dependance on G O D, naturally produces impatience, and idleness, and discontent; so these as naturally weaken the spirits, and lay the foundation for very afflicting and chronical habits of body, reducing men to a state of indolence, languor, and terrors, if not of despair.

WHAT has been said may be sufficient to illustrate and prove the point before us. I would not, however, be understood to lay it down as an universal truth, that good men are always healthy, or the wicked always otherwise. Undoubtedly there are some exceptions to the general rule; and some good reasons, why these exceptions should be suffered. Yet still, common experience will justify what has been advanced. Sooner or later, the most vicious are usually most distempered. And in the general course of things, the way to health is virtue.

HAVING thus assigned the origin of distempers, and found them to arise principally from the faults and follies of man, let us next, in order farther to acquit D I V I N E P R O -
V I D E N C E

VIDENCE of all blame in this matter, shew some reasons, why He may have permitted these faults and follies to exist, and to have such direful effects. To ask the former part of this question, with which the latter will be found connected, is in other words to ask, why He ever made man a moral agent, and endued him with liberty? The answer to this is plain, because otherwise we could not have been reasonable creatures, or capable of any obedience, virtue, reward, or properly of any happiness*. The whole dignity and glory of our nature depends therefore upon this, that we are free beings: But then, this privilege in all finite beings is liable to be corrupted and abused. We could not have been free, had it been impossible for us to have fallen and sinned. And when we swerve from our duty, the fault is entirely our own, and the punishments of it are no more than deserved.

WHAT then is it we desire or chuse?

WOULD we have been at first formed more perfect, and less liable to fall, or been now endued with more grace to restrain and preserve us?—This were possible; but have we any right to demand it? Now, we may, if we please, prevent the ill use of our freedom: And even then, we might have perverted it to our greater punishment. And surely

* Should any one be inclined to think, that creatures may have both some reason, and some pleasing sensations and reflections, which may be called happiness, without having freedom of will; I must own, that I cannot conceive how this can be. However, not to run into a needless dispute, it is sufficient to the argument above, that on our liberty our highest honour and felicity must depend: And this cannot be denied.

then, we should acquiesce in the considerations of GOD's sovereignty and wisdom, and of our own ignorance and partiality. — Would we, on the other hand, have been created mere machines, without either reason or liberty? This were most exceedingly ungrateful, absurd, and impious—Would we have had GOD restrain or over-rule our liberty, when we were about to abuse it? This were to all intents and purposes the same as not to grant it us at all—Would we have had Him by continual miracles prevent the ill consequences of our abusing it from falling upon us? The same, and greater, absurdities recur. Then the very constitution of things must have been altered; which we can have neither right nor reason to expect. Then He must, in compliance with our stubbornness and folly, have absolutely dispensed with His own laws, and abrogated the natural and wise sanctions He has established to guard and fence them—He must, in fine, have forgot or declined His absolute right to our obedience, as our CREATOR and GOVERNOR--- And can we imagine greater inconsistencies than these suppositions?

How much more wisely are things at present ordered! Some punishments are no more than proper to deter us from vice. Diseases are some of the mischievous effects that attend the commission of it. Sometimes indeed GOD may inflict these in an extraordinary way of vengeance: But in the common course of things He permits men to take the consequences of their actions in this state of trial. And if on this account we expose ourselves to suffer more than the brutes, yet still upon the whole, the condition of man is
much

much higher and happier than theirs. The glory of God, and the riches of His Goodness, are more manifested and displayed by this scene and dispensation, than they could have been, had there been no man endued with liberty. And the lesson we should learn is, to make this excellent talent subservient to the end for which it was granted; not our misery, but our happiness.

PERHAPS the greatest difficulty may be thought to lie in the supposition we have before made, that our distempers must originally be referred to the primitive fall and corruption of man—But what is there unreasonable in this? What is there more than is daily experienced, *viz.* that we derive our bad constitutions from our ancestors? Besides, can any thing be plainer, than that our nature is depraved? And how otherwise shall we be able at first to account for this evil? The fact cannot be denied; nor any other tolerable reason of it, that I know, given.—To proceed.

MANY good uses may be drawn from our distempers; which will farther shew the reasons of God's permitting them. It is His property to bring good out of evil, and to make even this grievous dispensation of things turn to the benefit and advantage of those, who consider and improve it well. Thus we are experimentally convinced of the vanity of confining our hopes and views to this world; when we find, that even our health, which alone can qualify us to enjoy any of the blessings of it, is liable in such a sad variety of ways to be impaired and destroyed — Thus are our thoughts and affections, naturally too apt to fix themselves here,

here, gradually weaned, and called off to better things— Thus we learn the value of health, to be thankful to GOD for it, to be careful to preserve it, nay to have an higher and quicker relish of the enjoyment of it, by sometimes lamenting the loss of it — Thus are those noble virtues of faith, patience, submission to the Divine will, and compassion, which are so essential in the Christian scheme, and so necessary, even in their own nature, to prepare us for the perfect happiness we were created to possess, both tried, exercised, and approved— Thus a due time of recollection and repentance is allowed us, which, in the day of ease and pleasure, we are so backward to allow ourselves; and the mind is led to a sense of dependance upon her CREATOR, and has opportunities of performing her duty and devotion to Him, whom she is too apt to forget amidst the comforts and enjoyments of life.

I MUST leave these particulars to your own private reflections, having not time to enlarge upon them. And from them we see, that tho' our distempers are generally owing to our own faults, and ought to be considered as the punishments of the Divine Justice for the sins of mankind; yet *in the midst of judgment GOD has remembered mercy*, and His Goodness is displayed even in our sorrows and infirmities. So that, in our present condition, to drop into our graves, without any more warning than the brutes have, would be very far from desirable, and much endanger our final and greatest happiness.

BUT

BUT if all this would not fully vindicate The PROVIDENCE of GOD, yet there is one consideration more, which, when added to the rest, must fully do it; viz. that of the helps and remedies He has afforded us, when we are afflicted with any pain or sickness. Far from leaving us to the deplorable state we bring ourselves into, He has graciously contrived various ways to ease and relieve us. The son of Sirach hath observed, of THE MOST HIGH cometh healing; and in my text, one of the chief *benefits* which we are thankfully to remember, is, that GOD *healeth all our diseases*, in consequence of His *forgiving all our iniquities*, which are the causes of them; that He *redeemeth our life from destruction*, and *reneweth our youth like the eagle's* *.

THIS blessing is the greater, and ought to make the stronger impression upon us, for it's being wholly unmerited. Notwithstanding which circumstance, He has plentifully stocked the earth with provisions of all sorts, with supplies of our wants in sickness, as well as in health. He has given a nourishing power to some roots and herbs; and foreseeing that we should want phyfic, as well as food, He has bestowed a fa-

* Several interpretations have been given of these last words. Perhaps the plainest and best is the supposing them to allude to the general strength and vigour of this bird. And thus our old translation has it, *making thee young and lusty as an eagle*. Others, and Grotius particularly, think that the thing here meant is the changing or assuming new feathers. And the following passage is represented as parallel: *They that wait upon The LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, &c.* II. xl. 31. Πτεροποιουσιν ως αετοι. LXX. *Assument pennas sicut aquilæ*: Vulg. But our translation is more agreeable to the Hebrew, *עלו אבר כנשרים*; and thus also this passage may be thought explicatory of the text.

a sanative virtue on others†: Which last also differ very much, according to the different disorders, to which we are subject, and which they are severally intended to rectify. Thus some are fitted to assuage our pains, and heal our wounds; others to cool the blood, when overheated; and to promote the necessary evacuations, when surfeits, excess, or any other cause, have too much repleted the body; others, again, to strengthen the nerves, and to quicken the circulation of the blood and animal spirits, when these are become too languid and debilitated to perform their natural offices.

THE brutes are indeed directed to some few remedies to repair the few distempers they are subject to. But surely, we ought to be thankful, that as we labour under so many more of these, so we are favoured with so much greater a variety of the others.

AND tho' we have not, like them, instinct to guide us to the knowlege of what will restore us, yet we have, what answers our purpose equally, the superior faculty of reason and understanding; which enables us, in this respect, as well as others, where nature has not furnished us with sufficient defence and protection, to provide for ourselves, and likewise to be useful and helpful to each other. This, in general, is the gift of GOD. And, in particular, He has granted

† To roots and herbs, we may add many other remedies; such as barks, woods, fruits, metals, minerals, salts, sulphurs, earths, waters, and animals. To which may be added operations of surgery, and regimen and exercise. So many are the means which GOD has provided to restore our health and ease.

granted to some both abilities and inclination to make a more accurate search into the nature, properties, and virtues of plants, &c. as well as into the parts of the human body; in order to discover the nature and causes of our pains and sicknesses, and to adapt proper medicines to them, which, by trial and experience, may be approved, and administered with efficacy and success. In this sense, *The LORD hath created the physician*; not only, as He at first appointed this noble art and science of healing, by furnishing materials for it, and making it our duty, in every way, to assist each other; but as that sagacity and skill, which is necessary to distinguish the physician, must be thought to proceed from Heaven; and as it is the blessing of *The ALMIGHTY*, which must, after all, crown his endeavours.

COMPASSION is also a principle derived from Above, and implanted in our breast by *GOD*. And the effect of this is the care and kindness and comfort, which we receive from our friends, in the time of sickness especially, and which must prove a mighty help and alleviation to the evils of it; as well as bind and endear us more strongly to each other. The irrational world shew no such solicitude, nor ever forego their own pleasure, or neglect their own health, to restore a fellow-creature to these blessings. In this respect also we feel the peculiar mercy of *GOD* in sickness, as there are hardly any of us, who are wholly destitute of these great consolations.

AND here, I cannot but mention, with all due regard and pleasure, the glorious spirit of benevolence, which, in this
D age

age particularly, has extended such assistances to the poor and needy, who might otherwise, and probably would, perish for the want of them. The numbers of voluntary societies, which have been supported on this occasion, are not only a relief to those who are afflicted, but contribute to improve more and more the way and means of their and our being relieved.

THESE means being therefore appointed by GOD for this great and good purpose, it follows, that it is the duty of all in such unhappy circumstances to have recourse to them; as all are obliged to preserve, or to recover, their health by all the lawful means they can. We ought ever to bless GOD for reaching out to us such succours under these calamities. We should not then sink under them, nor desperately throw away our lives because of them, but apply to what He has so wisely and graciously ordained. Miracles were formerly wrought in the cure of diseases. But the occasions of them are long since over. And what is it now but an idle and wanton tempting of The LORD to neglect the use of human methods of cure, and to rely only upon faith and prayer? Whatever infidels on the one hand, or enthusiasts on the other, may pretend, it is equally vain to suppose, that the many instances in the scriptures, of persons healed in an immediate and supernatural manner, owed their recovery to the strength of imagination or persuasion; and that GOD in these days continues to communicate any such extraordinary powers of healing. Both these extremes are most unworthy of any one, who would be determined by reason, or think with judgment.

MUCH

MUCH less should we rely on any secret unintelligible charms, which fraud or superstition may have introduced, and ignorance or credulity may have adopted and continued, for the removal of diseases. This is still more senseless and absurd. If any good effect follows such a conduct, we may pronounce it to be accidental. No wise or good man can be from hence encouraged in an affair of this consequence, to trifle, and to act at random.

As to the scheme of fatalism and necessity, which supposes the hour of death to be unalterably fixed and determined; this is another most absurd delusion, and what must have infinite bad consequences in common life. That hour, however concealed from our knowledge, in some measure depends upon our behaviour; and it becomes us always, not only to prepare for it in a religious sense, but to guard against it in a prudential one. Our best endeavours are necessary in both cases. We may as well, on the supposition of fate, refrain from food, as from physic. The event indeed of human remedies is uncertain; and so is the event of almost every thing which we undertake. But still we are to make use of proper means: For then, and then only, we shall have cause to be satisfied with our own conduct, as well as resigned to God's pleasure.

ANOTHER error to be carefully avoided is, the trusting to ignorant pretenders to the art of physic. These, as in all other arts, are more confident, and more sanguine in their promises, than such, as are best skilled in the nature,

difficulty, and hazard, of the undertaking. And, whether it be out of a wrong fear and shame of discovering some ignominious case, or by whatever other inducements they may be led; many have trusted to such strong professions, and must have suffered extremely thro' the rashness and bad judgment of such irregular boasters.

UNIVERSAL remedies are also much to be suspected, considering the vast variety of cases and constitutions; which must, I think, necessarily make that hurtful to one, which is serviceable to another; nay, which must cause the same person at different times to receive advantage and prejudice from the same things.

To apply then prescriptions to sick persons with a just prospect of doing good, there is need, not only of faithfulness and an honest intention, but of care and prudence, study and skill. Experience has undoubtedly very great advantages; but is surely then most to be regarded, when a regular foundation has been laid in necessary learning, and when a due knowledge of the preparatory arts and sciences has ripened the judgment, and enabled the mind to make all proper observations, and to compare different cases accurately together. Persons thus qualified and recommended, all, who have a just regard for their lives and healths, would chuse to consult.

THIS is a matter of the utmost consequence both to patients, and to the community of which they are members. And therefore a previous examination and approbation of the abilities

abilities of such as are to be thus highly intrusted, by some, who are of known integrity and skill in the profession, appears most reasonable, and cannot but contribute most to the satisfaction, as well as welfare of the publick. And this naturally brings our thoughts not only to our Universities; but to The Learned Foundation, of which you are members, set apart, I presume, not barely to carry medical knowlege by your joint consultations and discoveries to all the perfection you can, but to prevent ignorant, and of consequence, pernicious, intruders from disgracing the science, and hazarding the lives of your fellow-citizens.

YOUR office therefore and character is worthy of all respect and honour. Wise and good men must ever regard you as the instruments of G O D, whose Supreme property it is to *heal*, to *strengthen upon the bed of languishing*, and to *make all our bed in our sickness*. When therefore we are thus afflicted, it is on your faculty, under His blessing, that we must rely—*Under His blessing* *, without which all your skill, and all our confidence, are vain. *Asa's* fault is recorded, that he *sought not to The LORD, but to the physicians*. He presumed to rest

* *Non hæc humanis opibus, non arte magistrâ
Proveniunt, neque te, Ænea, mea dextera servat.*

Æn. L. XII.

Nor was this the sentiment of the poet only. We may add another heathen. *Et medici quidem secunda nobis pollicentur : Superest ut promissis Deus annuat.* From this passage of *Pliny*, his noble translator observes, “ That *Pliny*, “ by a superiority of judgment and reflection, believed human skill and “ medicinal art to be in vain, without the assistance of Heaven, and the “ blessing of ALMIGHTY GOD.” Lord *Orrery's* observations on *Pliny*, L. I. Ep. 22.

altogether

altogether on human help from his disease, without once applying to GOD to make it beneficial and salutary. A crime, which betrays a disbelief, or at least a disregard, of DIVINE PROVIDENCE; and in order to avoid which, the duty of prayer must ever be necessary both for the physician and the patient; That The Author of every good would direct the thoughts of the former to the most efficacious medicines, and prosper his endeavours for the recovery of the latter; And that He would be pleased to ward off such accidents and perils, as neither can foresee, and as will defeat the wishes and desires of both.

IN this sense we must still have *faith to be healed*, and *the prayer of faith shall yet save the sick*; as a religious dependence on GOD's Almighty Power and Goodness, exerting itself in humble applications to Him for assistance, is, according to the rules both of reason and Scripture, the duty of all, who labour under any diseases or torments, to qualify them for His favour, and the success of any means which can be used.—And no less necessary, when this mercy is obtained, are praises and thanksgivings; as well as the fulfilling every good purpose and resolution, which such troubles would probably inspire. Then, with the pious Psalmist, our *soul* ought to *blefs The LORD, who has forgiven our iniquities, and healed our diseases; who redeemeth our life from destruction; who crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*

HAVING thus considered at large the benefits of GOD, which relate to the healing and preservation of our bodies;
I pro-

I proceed to the other sort mentioned in the text, the provisions He hath made for curing the diseases of our souls, which are of a spiritual nature, and extend their consequences into eternity. And the still greater importance of these must procure me your excuse for detaining you a little longer in order to lay them before you; nay would render it quite impardonable to omit them.

MANY are the disorders and infirmities, to which our minds are subject; and much more grievous are they, than all the other evils, to which we can be subject. Our nature is in this respect also most frail and weak, frequently hurt by the assaults and temptations of its enemies, and continually needing the protection of heaven. Sin is the great disease of the soul; which, branching itself out into almost innumerable kinds, enfeebles all the powers of it, and naturally tends to destroy our eternal life. None of us are perfectly free from this sickness in some measure or other: None of us so *whole*, as *not to need a physician*: And yet none can be sufficient of themselves to help themselves, or their fellow-creatures. Lessons of moral philosophy will do extremely little towards removing these evils. Even religion, such as nature can teach, will be a very inadequate remedy. Without the revealed instructions, grace, and mercy of GOD ALMIGHTY, we must all have continued in gross ignorance and doubts, and probably the most pernicious errors, under an heavy bond of corruption, and a most uneasy sense of guilt.

THESE

THESE disorders of our minds, as well as the others of our bodies, are owing to an ungrateful abuse of the noblest faculties of reason and liberty, partly by our first parents, but chiefly by ourselves. GOD *created man upright*, capable of knowing and practising all the things, that make for his peace and happiness. By the fall we are depraved in our inward, as well as outward frame. But GOD will make equitable allowances for the difficulties, which arise from hence in the performance of our duty. And this alone would be sufficient to preclude us from complaining of Him, with any shew of truth or justice, on account of the situation we naturally find ourselves in. But He has been good to us infinitely beyond our deserts, in contriving a most wonderful method of restoring us from it, of *forgiving all our sins, and healing all our diseases, of redeeming our life from endless destruction*, and giving us a fresh title to glory and immortality.

THESE are the *loving-kindnesses*, these the *tender mercies*, celebrated in Scripture, as far exceeding all others. GOD be praised, that, in a spiritual as well as temporal respect, we are so far from being left destitute and comfortless, that, in proportion to our disorders and distresses, we have been relieved and assisted. Our BLESSED SAVIOUR is The Great Physician of souls, *by whose stripes we are healed*, whose word is the word of life, whose promises are the means of our consolation, and whose SPIRIT is given to strengthen and support us. To Him therefore, if we have any sense of our weakness or danger, we ought always to have recourse,

recourse, and should never omit the applying to the vivifying ordinances, which He has appointed. Both gratitude and interest join in enforcing this our duty upon us.

A JUST sense of this duty, it must be the desire and business of all serious and good persons, not only to promote in themselves, but to extend as widely as possible. Every opportunity of doing the greatest good, they will readily and cheerfully embrace. What the celebrated author of *Religio Medici* said of himself, shews a concern and compassion truly christian. "I cannot go to cure the body of my patient, but I forget my profession, and call unto GOD for his soul *." And indeed, they, who are called to attend sick persons, when the mind is naturally disposed to be serious, have power to be highly serviceable to them, in communicating the great comforts and advices of religion, which must at once calm and strengthen the mind; and which, at the same time, cannot but have a good effect on the body, and render the methods used to restore it more efficacious. The health of the whole man ought certainly to be consulted and provided for. And such is the present connection between the soul and body, that neither can be perfectly sound and easy, if the other be in any disorder or pain. Unruly passions will defeat the virtue of medicines: And the fears of death, like the fears of other distempers, will only accelerate and aggravate it. It must therefore be of the greatest consequence, in order to promote a recovery, to compose the mind to a perfect resignation and submission to

* Part II. Sect. 6.

The Divine Will, and to fortify it with those glorious hopes of Immortality, which Christianity alone can give. However, it ought to be the first concern of all, when visited with any distemper, to take care of that part, which they must own to be far more excellent; and with regard to which, their care is sure to be availing to their safety and happiness.

AND for these reasons, as GOD has appointed some to minister to the relief and cure of the body, so has He made it peculiarly the business and duty of others to help men in their spiritual affairs, to exhort them to a lively repentance and a saving faith, to give them satisfaction in their doubts and scruples, and to dispense to them the ordinances of the gospel. These different offices, then, are far from obstructing and hindering each other. And it must be great imprudence and rashness in such circumstances of affliction to neglect either.

THE minister therefore, as well as the physician, should be called in betimes, while there is a prospect and probability of receiving advantage from their judgment and counsels. Both must proceed in rational and prudent methods. And therefore such delays, as will frustrate these, and leave no reason or strength to deal with properly, must be fatal and inexcusable. What charms are in a natural way, that at least instructions and communions are, quite idle and unprofitable, unless the mind be fit to attend to, and receive them. Tho' we have all reason to believe, that GOD will give a blessing to these His ordinances, when they are applied to
with

with true seriousness and devotion ; yet, if these qualifications are wanting, the mere external work can be but vain. And however some may act in such a case, we of this church dare not prostitute such sacred things ; willing indeed to do all the good we can in attending the sick ; but assured, that we can do little or none, when there is little or no sense remaining*.

BUT still, as sickness frequently seizes persons on a sudden, and as the event of it is always uncertain ; it must become us all, whatever our situation or calling here may be, not to trust beforehand to any acts of religion which we can then perform—not to defer our duty, or our repentance, till we can be no longer sure either of practising it, or of being regarded—but in the present *accepted time*, in the present *day of health and salvation*, to secure the most important of all points, and continually to prepare our souls for the great change we must shortly undergo. This the consideration of the several benefits, which I have pointed out, at once obliges and incites us to do. While GOD is pleased to bless us with strength and abilities, ought we not to employ these faith-

* We find, in the *decretals*, “ all physicians strictly charged, that when “ they shall be called to visit sick persons, they first of all admonish and “ persuade them to send for the physician of souls, that after provision hath “ been made for the spiritual health of the soul, they may the more hope- “ fully proceed to the use of corporal medicines.” — I take this from Mr. *Arnald's* excellent *commentary* on the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, p. 195. This rule, tho' the authority of it no longer binds, is still recommended by its intrinsic reason : And it were at least to be wished, that these two orders of men should act as it were jointly ; which, I am persuaded, will enable them both to act with the greatest advantage to the patients.

fully to His honour, the good of our fellow-creatures, and our own comfort? While He is pleased to continue to us the offers of His mercy, and the means of grace, how absurd and ungrateful will it be to despise the one, and to neglect the other!

LET every one then be sensible of the infinite obligations they lye under to GOD, and give up readily and chearfully the best of their lives to His service, *while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when they shall say, I have no pleasure in them.* Then shall we have laid in a stock of support and comfort against an age of weakness, and a bed of pain.—Then shall we avoid that just reproach, those bitter reflections, and that severe condemnation, which must be the consequence of unbelief or impenitence, and all which must be more terrible, in proportion to the talents we have been intrusted with, and the mercies we have abused.—Then, thro' the goodness of our GOD, and the merits of our REDEEMER, we shall have intitled ourselves to another life of certain eternal happiness; after all human care and skill shall fail, after the world and its enjoyments shall be no more. To conclude.

BY behaving thus yourselves, and recommending such behaviour to those who come under your care, you will act suitably to the engagement and oath of the great father of your profession; an oath worthy of your most respectful attention, and conscientious observation. In which, amongst others, the following promises are made.

“ I WILL in purity and holiness take heed to my life,
 “ and to the art I profess” — and yet again, “ Whatever
 “ houses I shall visit, I will visit to the advantage of the
 “ patients, keeping myself free from all wilful injustice,
 “ corruption, and sensuality *.”

IF these were the sentiments of so eminent an heathen,
 to a christian audience, sure nothing more needs be said,
 than, *go and do likewise.*

* Αγνως δε και οσιως διατηρησω βιον τον εμον και τεχνην την εμην.

Εις οικιας διεκοσας αν εσιω, εσελευσομαι επ' ωφελειη καμνοντων, εκλος εων
 πασης αδικιης εκουσιης και φθοριης της τε αλλης, και αφροδισιων λογων, επι τε
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HIPPOCRATES.



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HIPPOCRATES.



"I will in purity and honesty take heed to my life,
 "and to the art I practise"—and yet again, "Whatever
 "houses I shall visit, I will visit to the advantage of the
 "patients, keeping myself free from all worldly influence,
 "corruption, and sensuality."

If these were the sentiments of so eminent an historian,
 to a Christian audience, there nothing more needs be said,
 than, go and do likewise.

As for the history of the College of Physicians, it is a
 subject of great interest to the public, and one which
 has of late years attracted much of the public attention.
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HYPOCRATES



